

Mental Health Planning Council 11/7/03 Meeting Minutes

Members present:

Rich Greb, Chair	X	Bill Jones	X
Libby Jones, Co-Chair	X	Phyllis Kennedy	
Jimmie Arrington		Jeff McCloud	X
Mary Bethel	X	Dr. James Osberg	X
Dorothy O'Neil	X	Pat Prescott	X
Rochelle Edwards		Chris Rakes	X
Dan Fox	X	Frank Read	X
Dr. Linner Ward Griffin		Osborne Shamberger	
Kaye Holder	X	Paula Snipes	
Patricia Harris	X	Mary Recca Todd	X
John Hayes		Carolyn Wiser	X
Ellen Holliman		Laura Yates	X
Bill Hussey		Guest: Julia Bick	X
Diann Irwin	X		
Lucy Dorsey	X		
Support Staff: Julie Seibert	X	Support Staff: Amy Smiley	X

Rich Greb, Chair

Rich opened the meeting by asking everyone to take a final look at the minutes. Dorothy O'Neil made a motion to approve, Mary Bethel seconded the motion and everyone was in favor of approving the previous minutes.

Rich explained to the Council that he made the decision not to send the letter discussed in the last meeting to the Secretary regarding the expansion of Special Assistance to persons with disabilities. The reasons given for this decision were: (1) The General Assembly had adjourned for the year, (2) The General Assembly *did* vote to expand the funding to make it available to up to 800 individuals during the 03-04 fiscal year and the 04-05 fiscal year. (3) Previously, this option was only available to 400 eligible individuals in 29 counties. It is now open to individuals across the entire state to participate.

There was discussion about whether to write the letter later next year or to wait and see how the first progress report to the General Assembly looks in terms of expansion of Special Assistance. Amy Smiley stated she would contact the Division of Aging's contact person when the report has been submitted to the General Assembly and

request a copy for the Council. Mary Bethel gave Amy the name of the person to contact. It is not due to the General Assembly until next Spring.

Dorothy O'Neil suggested that we table the letter and focus more on housing initiatives since Special Assistance is a piece of the larger picture of housing. Mary Bethel suggested that maybe the Council should commend the Secretary for the Housing Initiative in North Carolina and express our excitement about the Special Assistance expansion this year. Laura Yates agreed with Mary.

Dr. Osberg made a motion to table the letter for now. Patricia Harris seconded the motion. Rich suggested, instead, that the Council write a letter to the MH Commission Subcommittee on Housing expressing an interest of the Council to assist and/or participate in their work. Dorothy O'Neil made a formal motion in favor of this and Jeff MCloud seconded the motion. The Council agreed that this letter should be sent as soon as it's composed without waiting for the next meeting to review it. Amy Smiley will help Rich draft a letter representing the Council's wishes.

Julia Bick, DHHS Housing Coordinator

Julia thanked the Council for asking her to come and share information about the Secretary's Housing Initiative. She expressed her excitement that the Council recognizes this as an important issue in North Carolina for persons with disabilities. She structured her presentation around a handout she brought to the Council. First, Julia described the DHHS partnership with the NC Housing Finance Agency. This partnership targets units to extremely low-income persons with disabilities and homeless populations. Local lead agencies are named as partners in this plan and will act as the contact and referral source for the development. DHHS is also partnering with the NC Housing Finance Agency and the NC Department of Correction in providing staff capacity to coordinate prevention efforts.

Julia pointed out that the NC State Plan 2003 states "Assuring the availability of community housing will require that in addition to assuring an adequate provider network, the public MH/DD/SA service system expand its capacity to support its constituents in accessing and utilizing generic affordable housing resources." Essential elements of achieving this vision are independence, affordability and accessibility. A range of housing options should be available including permanent and transitional housing.

Julia summarized that the Housing Initiative in North Carolina sets out to: improve capacity of DHHS agencies to maximize existing resources, expand DHHS partnership in Low Income Tax Credit developments, and respond to shifting federal policy on homelessness as the organizing platform for focusing resources to better meet the housing needs of extremely low-income households, including those with disabilities.

Julie Seibert, Division of MH/DD/SAS, Planning Team

Julie Seibert reviewed the Mental Health Block Grant (MHBG) Report draft for SFY 02-03. The Council chose to review it as a whole, instead of breaking out into separate child and adult committees. The following areas were reviewed:

- Child and Adult Comprehensive Community-Based MH Services Systems
- Child and Adult Mental Health System Data Epidemiology

- Targeted Services to Homeless and Rural Populations
- Focused Expansion Programs utilizing MHBG funds

The Council reviewed each Criterion for both Adults and Children. As each section was covered, members gave input. At the end of the review, all the comments were summarized again and the Council talked about what key points to include in the letter to the Center for Mental Health Services. (See letter attached).

Individual member updates:

- Rich and Bill Jones reminded the Council that the next meeting, February 6, 2004 would include a "2004 Kick-off" Workshop. This will be a training to re-orient ourselves with the Council's mission and to discuss goals for the upcoming year.
- Laura Yates shared that she was invited to go to Columbia, SC to speak about the NC Prison System's Developmental Disabilities programs. We are one of two states that were named as providers of outstanding DD services.
- Mary R. Todd announced that there would be a NC State Conference on Homelessness December 2-3, 2003. The Finance Housing Agency is a partner in targeting expansion units for persons with disabilities (as Julia Bick explained earlier).

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:00 pm.

The next meeting will be February 6, 2004.